

Guest Editorial

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New school year brings excitement

A back-to-school editorial by State Superintendent Tony Evers

I'm always excited by the start of a new school year. It provides fresh opportunities for our teachers and students to get going on new learning while they make new friends and renew social and extracurricular activities.

Amidst the many challenges and changes for the 2015-16 school year, there will be one constant: a singular focus on preparing students to be college and career ready. But what does that mean to be ready for college, ready for careers?

Certainly, we expect all of our students to gain solid academic knowledge in the various subject areas. But there's more. Students also need to have the social and emotional competence to be able to apply their knowledge, think critically, and communicate and collaborate with others. That's part of the real world that awaits them. We want our kids to be creative, to show appropriate leadership skills, and to develop the behaviors of perseverance, responsibility, and adaptability so they are ready for the inevitable struggles in life.

Our schools and teachers need family and community support to deliver the rigorous, rich, and well-rounded education our kids deserve. Throughout the spring and summer, we've been working on strategies that will support educators as they build relationships that strengthen results for our students. Look for more information on the work of my Parent Advisory Council in September.

During this school year, a number of schools are piloting academic and career planning. It's a bit of a change in the way schools do things, but the process is a great opportunity for our young people to really think through with their parents and teachers what they want to do going forward. The process honors all postsecondary routes, including military, apprenticeship, certification, technical college, and university education. It also helps students and their families recognize that many people move in and out of different routes throughout their lives.

While Wisconsin's statewide assessments, used to measure how well students are learning, are changing, they will still have the goals of measuring student academic achievement and improving classroom instruction. And that's really what it's all about. Moving kids forward, closing achievement gaps, and making sure the next

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generation is ready and willing to take charge. We can all make that happen by supporting our hard working students, educators, and school leaders.

Our plan for every child to graduate ready for college and careers is called Agenda 2017. I just know it's going to be a great year. Let's do it.

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COMING SOON: Visit WisconsinDPI on YouTube, <http://youtube.com/wisconsindpi>, for

- State Superintendent's Back-to-School Video Message
- What Agenda 2017 Means for Students, Teachers, and Parents

NOTES: A high resolution photo of the state superintendent is available on the Department of Public Instruction "Media Contacts and Resources" webpage at <http://dpi.wi.gov/news/contacts-resources>. This news release is available electronically at http://dpi.wi.gov/sites/default/files/news-release/dpinr2015_77.pdf.